



# *2009 City of Gardner DirectionFinder® Survey*

## **Final Report**

*Submitted to*

*The City of Gardner, KS*

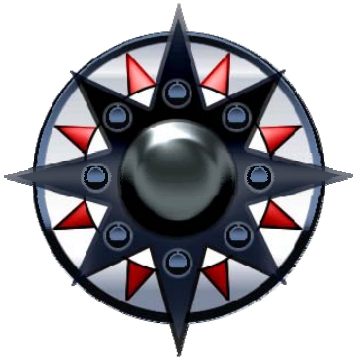


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## Executive Summary

### Overview and Methodology

The City of Gardner conducted its sixth *DirectionFinder*® survey during the summer of 2009. The survey was designed to gather input from residents about the quality of services provided by the City of Gardner. The information gathered from the survey will help the City establish budget priorities and policy decisions.

A seven-page survey was mailed to a random sample of 1,500 households in the City of Gardner. Of the 1,500 households that received a survey, 847 completed the survey by mail exceeding the original goal of 800 completed surveys. The results for the random sample of 847 households have a 95% level of confidence with a precision of at least +/- 3.4%.

This report contains:

- an executive summary of the methodology
- charts depicting the overall results of the survey with comparisons to the results of the 2005 and 2007 survey.
- GIS mapping
- benchmarking data that shows how the survey results for Gardner compare to other cities across the U.S. and to cities in the metropolitan Kansas City area
- importance satisfaction analysis
- tabular data for all questions on the survey
- a copy of the survey instrument.

***Interpretation of “Don’t Know” Responses.*** The percentage of persons who provide “don’t know” responses is important because it often reflects the level of utilization of city services. For graphing purposes, the percentage of “don’t know” responses has been excluded to facilitate valid comparisons with data from previous years. The percentage of “don’t know” responses for each question is provided in the Tabular Data Section of this report. When the “don’t know” responses have been excluded, the text of this report will indicate that the responses have been excluded with the phrase “*who had an opinion.*”

### Major Findings

- **Top Ratings in the U.S. and the Metropolitan Kansas City Area.** When compared to other cities across the United States, Gardner rated above the national average in the effectiveness of communication, the quality of customer service from City employees, and the quality of parks and recreation programs and facilities. When compared to other cities in the metropolitan Kansas City area, the City of Gardner rated average or above average in seven of the eight major city services categories accessed.

- **Overall City Services.** Residents were generally satisfied with the quality of services provided by the City. The findings are listed below:
  - The highest levels of satisfaction with City services, based upon the combined percentage of “very satisfied” and “satisfied” responses among residents *who had an opinion* were the quality of police, fire and ambulance services (88%), parks and recreation (88%), and the quality of customer service (82%). Residents were least satisfied with the overall flow of traffic in the City (35%).
  - The City services that showed the most significant increases from 2007 were flow of traffic (+7%), city water, sewer and electric utilities (+7%) and the quality of stormwater management (+7%). None of the overall city service items assessed showed a significant decrease.
- **Services that residents thought should receive the most increase in emphasis over the next two years.** The area that residents thought should receive the most increase in emphasis from the City over the next two years was the overall flow of traffic in the City. Second in the priority ranking, was the maintenance of City streets, buildings and facilities. and third was City water, sewer and electric utilities.
- **Perceptions of Life in Gardner.** Over three-fourths (79%) of the residents surveyed *who had an opinion* rated the quality of life in Gardner as “excellent” or “good”; 88% were positive about the feeling of safety in the City and 81% were positive about the quality of services offered in Gardner.
- **Public Safety.** The public safety areas that improved most from 2007 were the level of emphasis to combat drug activity (+26%) and the quality of local ambulance service (+14%). There were no significant decreases recorded.
- **City Maintenance.** The maintenance areas that improved most from 2007 were the snow removal on major city streets (+7%) and the adequacy of city street lighting (+8%). The most significant decrease from 2007 for City maintenance was the maintenance of major city streets (-5%).
- **Parks and Recreation.** Residents were generally very satisfied with the quality of Gardner parks and recreation programs and facilities. The results are listed below:
  - The highest levels of satisfaction with parks and recreation services, based upon the combined percentage of “very satisfied” and “satisfied” responses among residents who had an opinion, were the maintenance of City parks (88%), the City swimming pool/aquatic center (89%) and the number of City parks (83%). Compared to other cities in the Metropolitan Kansas City area, Gardner was a metro leader in the satisfaction rating for swimming pools.

- Satisfaction levels improved from 2007 in all 11 of the parks and recreation areas assessed. The areas that showed the most improvement were the outdoor athletic fields (+24%), City youth athletic programs (+13%), and the Gardner golf course (+13%).
- **Water, Sewer and Electric Utilities.** The utility services that showed the most significant increases from 2007 were the amount charged for utilities (+12%) and the accuracy of your utility bill (+11%). There were no significant decreases in utility services from 2007.
- **Enforcement of City Codes and Ordinances.** Satisfaction levels increased in all areas of City code and ordinance services. Significant increases were noted in the enforcement of the maintenance of business property (+24%), the enforcement of the clean up of litter and debris (+14%), and the enforcement of the mowing and trimming of lawns (+10%).
- **City Communications.** The communication area that showed the most improvement in satisfaction from 2007 was the quality of the City's web page (+6%). The city's effort to keep the public informed regarding local issues showed a slight decrease from 2007 (-3%).
- **City Leadership.** Satisfaction levels with City leadership decreased in all areas from 2007. The most significant decreases were in the effectiveness of appointed boards and commissions (-5%) and the quality of leadership of elected officials (-17%).

### ***Other Findings***

- Eighty-seven percent (87%) of residents indicated they currently read the City's newsletter.
- The percentage of residents who have internet access in their homes stayed the same compared to 2007 (86% in 2007 to 86% in 2009).
- The likelihood that residents would pay for City services over the Internet stayed the same compared to 2007 (currently 56% are willing to use the internet to pay for city services).
- The number of residents who used the internet to pay their utility bill increased from 15% in 2005 to 29% in 2007 to 39% in 2009. One fourth (25%) of residents indicated they had used the internet to pay their parks and recreation registration in 2009.